

**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



Region One  
490 North Meridian Rd.  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
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FAX: 406-257-0349  
Ref:DV099.97  
August 16, 1996

TO: Environmental Quality Council, Water Quality Div., Capitol Building, Helena, 59620-1704  
Dept. of Health & Environmental Quality, Metcalf Bldg., PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office  
Lands Section  
Legal Unit  
Wildlife Division  
Fisheries Division

Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's  
Memorial Building, Helena, 59620-1201

Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, 59620-1800

Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624

George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624

Donald Kern, Program Director, Montana River Action Network, PO Box 383, 30 N. Last Chance  
Gulch, Helena, 59624

Flathead County Commissioners, Flathead County Courthouse, Kalispell, 59901

Flathead Co. Library, 247 First Ave. E., Kalispell, 59901

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the proposed redirection of a stream channel in a section of Hay Creek and is submitted for your consideration. Comments will be accepted until Monday, September 2, 1996 by Fisheries Biologist Ladd Knotek, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Vincent', written over a horizontal line.

Dan Vincent  
Regional Supervisor

/nb  
Enclosure

# DRAFT

## MEPA/NEPA/HB495 GENERIC CHECKLIST

### PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action Redirection of a stream channel
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
3. Name of Project Hay Creek Enhancement - Phase II
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)
5. If Applicable:  
  
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date 09/09/96  
Estimated Completion Date 09/30/96  
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 100%
6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)  
  
Flathead County
7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed: residential . . . . . <u>0</u> acres industrial . . . . . <u>0</u> acres	(d) Floodplain . . . . . <u>5</u> acres see (c)
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/ Recreation . . . . . <u>0</u> acres	(e) Productive: irrigated cropland . . . . . <u>0</u> acres dry cropland . . . . . <u>0</u> acres forestry . . . . . <u>0</u> acres rangeland . . . . . <u>0</u> acres other . . . . . <u>0</u> acres
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas . . . . . <u>5</u> acres (Wetland is a floodplain)	
8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.
9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

Create a low level embankment and slight channel modifications to confine a lowland section of Hay Creek to a smaller area. Extensive sedimentation and beaver activity in this area have created a large willow swamp. Construction of the embankment will confine flows to a  $\approx$  100 ft wide section and limit water infiltration. Controlling water loss will allow flows to reach the North Fork Flathead River and provide access for migrating fish.

**10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	124/Stream Protection Act	6/24/96
US Army Corps of Engineers	404	6/24/96
Montana Water Quality Bureau	3A	6/24/96

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Bonneville Power	\$10,300

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Bureau of Reclamation	Technical (Engineering) Assistance

**11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

Bureau of Reclamation  
Montana Water Quality Bureau  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Wildlife Division  
United State Forest Service



## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Evaluation of the Impacts of the Proposed Action Including Secondary and Cumulative Impacts on the Physical and Human Environment:

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		x				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		x				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		x				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			x		Yes	1.d.
e. Other: __						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1.d. Primary channel is currently braided and heavily silted in. Confinement of water with an embankment and redirecting towards main channel will restore to original course. Embankment will be low enough to allow annual spring flooding, but high enough to restrict flow during low water periods.

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		x				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		x				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture or temperature patterns, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		x				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		x				
e. Other: __						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT** (continued)

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity or pathogens?		x				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			x		Yes	3.b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		x				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?			x		Yes	3.d.
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		x				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		x				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?			x		Yes	3.g.
h. Increase in the risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		x				
i. Violation of the Montana Non Degradation Statute?		x				
j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		x				
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		x				
l. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		x				
m. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3.b., 3.d. Construction will direct low flows through a narrower riparian section to limit infiltration. The embankment will cut off flows from currently flooded areas during low flow periods, but allow natural flooding of the wetland at high flows. Confinement of flows will help prevent dewatering in lower sections, providing bull trout passage and additional wetland habitat downstream.

3.g. Groundwater levels may decrease locally at the embankment site during low flows. Limiting loss of surface water to infiltration should increase groundwater quantity downstream.

\*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.



## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			x		Yes	4.a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		x				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species?		x				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		x				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		x				
f. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):  
 4.a. Construction of the embankment and temporary access road will require removal of some willows and natural vegetation. All affected areas will be replanted with willows and native grasses immediately after completion of the project.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		x				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		x				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			x		Yes	5.c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		x				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		x				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?			x		Yes	5.f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			x		Yes	5.g.
h. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):  
 5.c., 5.g. Removing water from the lowland willow area during low flows will decrease beaver habitat in late summer and fall. Increased flows will increase habitat downstream, but dams on the main channel will be removed.  
 5.f. The project area is considered important grizzly bear habitat. Adverse effects to bears will be short-term (during construction) and negligible. This habitat is primarily used by grizzly bears in the spring. This project will cause little change in habitat during spring. Increased fall flows are intended to allow fish passage, which may provide food for bears.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. <u>LAND USE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

\*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.



## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: ____		X				
b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>	IMPACT*				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. Other: ____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

\*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.



## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		x				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural or historic values?		x				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		x				
d. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		x				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		x				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		x				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		x				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		x				
f. Other: _						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)**

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternatives Include:

1. No Action: In current state, excessive water loss occurs in this section of stream causing dewatering downstream, and a barrier to fish passage.
2. Continuously remove beaver dams and beavers to allow enough water to reach downstream sections. In isolation, this alternative may not accomplish the goal and obligate FWP to future action as new beavers colonize the area.

The most efficient and effective solution is to minimize water loss and control beaver population on the main channel.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

None.

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

No EIS is required. Adverse impacts of this project are generally short-term and minor. Effects to the wetland area will be minimal because of natural spring/early summer and restoration of stream flow in downstream sections.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Involvement has been with private land owners who own property on which this project will occur.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

30 days

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Fisheries Biologist Ladd Knotek  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
490 N. Meridian Rd.  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406)751-4542

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

## **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**





